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English Medium Instruction Experiences of Lecturers: Evidence from Tertiary Education in Türkiye

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The integration of English into the education domain continues to expand steadily. Language policies in educational institutions are shaped according to the English requirements of respective countries. With the recognition of English as a lingua franca, it has taken on a significant role as the medium of instruction (EMI) in Turkish universities, with an increasing number of programs now being offered in English. For higher education institutions aiming to improve their rankings, establish a strong reputation, and enhance visibility, English is a critical factor. As a result, many opt to provide undergraduate programs in English. This study aims to determine the attitudes of lecturers toward full EMI programs. A qualitative research design was employed, with data gathered through semi-structured interviews with lecturers and classroom observations. The sample was selected using purposive sampling to ensure that participants had substantial experience with EMI. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, identifying key themes and patterns. Despite the inherent challenges of EMI, the findings revealed that lecturers hold positive attitudes towards EMI. Additionally, they emphasized the need for short-term, context-specific professional development opportunities focused on both language proficiency and pedagogical skills for EMI. These findings offer valuable insights for improving the overall quality of EMI and for guiding university policies to better meet the evolving needs of EMI programs.

Introduction

English Medium Instruction (EMI) has gained momentum as a means of assisting internationalization initiatives in the countries where English is not the primary language (Macaro et al., 2018). Higher education institutions worldwide have paid close attention to EMI programs due to the benefits they offer for internationalization (Kim, 2014; Kim et al.,

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2017), increased student and lecturer mobility (Atlı & Özal, 2017), and greater academic competitiveness (Kim & Tatar, 2018), and Türkiye is no exception in this sense.

The decision to adopt full EMI programs in Turkish universities is most likely a result of the acceptance of English as the lingua franca of academia (Crystal, 2003; Mauranen et al., 2010) and the need to provide students with the language skills (Lu, 2020) required to succeed in a world that is becoming more mobile and globally connected. Additionally, EMI tends to increase international student enrolment, academic prestige (Tamtam et al., 2012), and opportunities for securing international research funding. Even local students are drawn to the universities that offer English-medium courses because of this circumstance (Turhan & Kırkgöz, 2018). The number of undergraduate programs that offer full EMI has risen within the past few decades. Given the fact that each country's EMI environment may vary (Dearden, 2015), EMI in Turkish higher education institutions has also been the subject of an increasing number of research studies (Atlı & Özal, 2017; Ekoç, 2020; Kırkgöz, 2009; Ozer, 2020; Turhan & Kırkgöz, 2018; Yılmaz-Virlan & Demirbulak, 2020). However, it is an ongoing discussion of how successfully subject content is learned (Ozer & Bayram, 2019; Selvi, 2014) and how much EMI is internalized by professors and students (Ekoç, 2020) as a result of its implementation. As one of the stakeholders of EMI, lecturers who must adapt their pedagogical strategies and deal with the linguistic and cultural challenges of teaching content in a language other than their own also face certain challenges when EMI programs are implemented (Başibek et al., 2014).

This study builds on earlier research (e.g. Aguilar, 2017; Darling, 2021; Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011; Karakaş, 2016; Kırkgöz, 2009; Ozer, 2020) and aims to modestly contribute to the expanding EMI literature by investigating the lecturers' perspectives on the full EMI programs at a prominent technical university in Türkiye. Through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, lecturers were able to share their experiences, difficulties, and insights while also shining a light on the advantages and potential drawbacks of EMI. Understanding the lecturers' perspective on full EMI programs can help to develop effective solutions that address problems, encourage collaboration, and improve the educational experience for students and lecturers equally in higher education. The key findings of this study could apply to other EMI environments around the world and could be a useful tool for lecturers, administrators, and educational policymakers who are interested in EMI initiatives. It is possible to assess the effects of the immediate and larger educational environments by recognizing the opinions and needs of lecturers within the local institutional framework. To meet this end, within the scope of this qualitative study, we focused on the following research questions:

- (1) What are the perceptions of lecturers who teach undergraduate-level courses where English is the medium of instruction?
- (2) What are the needs of lecturers who teach undergraduate-level courses where English is the medium of instruction?

Background to the Study

EMI Research around the world

English-medium instruction (EMI) can be defined as “the use of English (for example sole use, partial use, code switching and so on) both by students and content teachers to learn/teach academic subjects (other than English itself) within EMI settings regardless of



their locale” (Akıncıoğlu, 2024, p. 4). In recent years, there has been a proliferation of the number of studies examining EMI particularly in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region (Lei & Hu, 2022). For example, Cho (2012) sought the opinions of lecturers and students at a South Korean university and found that EMI courses were found less effective than courses taught in the Korean language, largely due to the limited foreign language proficiency of the students. The language proficiency of students and lecturers has surfaced as one of the issues that need to be considered, along with the difficulty of understanding the lessons delivered in a foreign language. Dearden and Macaro (2016) examined the attitudes of 25 lecturers in Austria, Italy, and Poland toward EMI through interviews. The study revealed that despite the difficulties experienced by lecturers such as low language proficiency and limited awareness of pedagogical dynamics, lecturers had generally positive view of EMI, which was motivated mainly by internationalization and globalization efforts in higher education. Research also shows that EMI is a useful strategy to encourage student mobility by facilitating the internationalization of higher education (Corrales et al., 2016). On the other hand, in Perez-Cañado's (2020) study on the needs of teaching staff at a Spanish public university, it was emphasized that teaching staff should be provided with adequate pedagogical education support, language support, as well as academic and financial incentives.

EMI Research in Türkiye

Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Türkiye serves as a prime example of EMI phenomenon, as the prominence of English-medium programs has been on the rise in an era dominated by internationalization. EMI has gained significant momentum in Türkiye in recent years and is generally regarded as an indicator of prestige setting one university apart from the others. Researchers have also sought to better understand the current state of EMI at the tertiary level. For example, in their questionnaire study, Ölçü and Eröz-Tuğa (2013) looked into the attitudes of Turkish lecturers towards EMI and reported that instructors who taught both Turkish- and English-medium courses supported EMI for reasons such as easy access to English-language resources and the role of EMI in boosting student motivation and engagement. Başıbek et al. (2014) surveyed Turkish Engineering lecturers' attitudes toward EMI through a questionnaire. Results indicated positive views on EMI, noting its beneficial impact on students' academic success and future careers. However, lecturers expressed concerns about their students' proficiency in English for succeeding in language courses. Karakaş (2016) examined Turkish EMI lecturers' views on the use of Turkish in EMI courses. He found that most lecturers were open to using Turkish alongside English to maximize learning when English-language instruction proves challenging. The lecturers that supported using English only cited reasons such as university-level EMI policies and the presence of international students in the classroom. Turhan and Kırkgöz (2018) investigated the perceptions of Turkish engineering students through questionnaires and focus group interviews, and the perceptions of lecturers through interviews. Results highlighted extrinsic motivation for EMI in relation to its perceived linguistic and academic benefits for both groups. However, students expressed dissatisfaction with lecturers dominating classroom interactions, while lecturers identified insufficient linguistic proficiency in students. Another researcher, Ozer (2020) studied the views of 102 lecturers at a Turkish state university regarding EMI via an open-ended questionnaire. Results showed overall support for EMI lecturers but emphasized the necessity for enhanced and continuous university support to enhance pedagogy and language proficiency for both lecturers and students.

Despite the abundant research on students' perspectives on EMI (e.g. Atlı & Ozal, 2017; Ekoç, 2020; Ozer & Bayram, 2019; Yılmaz-Vırlan & Demirbulak, 2020), research focusing

on lecturers' perspectives is somewhat scarce in the Turkish context. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to shed more light on the multifaceted phenomenon of EMI from the point of views of the lecturers.

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research design to explore lecturers' attitudes and experiences regarding EMI. By combining interviews and classroom observations, the research aimed to gather in-depth insights into the teaching practices and challenges encountered by lecturers in EMI settings.

Data collection tools

In this study, interviews and observations were used as data collection instruments. Following both Morse's (1994) minimum requirement of six participants and Kuzel's (1992) suggestion of between six and eight participants in qualitative research, this research includes 13 participants for interviews and observations. Having determined the standards for data collection processes, project researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with lecturers whose courses they also observed.

The guiding questions for the semi-structured interviews, adapted from Alhassan (2021) and Ozer (2020), cover the subjects of lecturers' EMI teaching background, impressions of their own and students' experiences, pedagogical training as well as teaching background in Turkish.

The interviews were conducted one-on-one with the lecturers, with each interview session being scheduled in advance to ensure availability. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent, and subsequently, the recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researchers to ensure accuracy and reliability in the analysis of the qualitative data.

In addition to conducting interviews, observations were carried out as part of the data collection process. In this study, we employed participant observation methodology described by Mills (2014). Observations focused on in-class interaction including the questions exchanged, the responses from both parties, and the strategies the lecturers use when the content is not understood. Observed courses varied according to the day of the week, time of day, faculty, and lecturer in order to increase the validity and reliability of the collected data. Similar to the previous studies (Pun & Macaro 2019; Sahan et al., 2021), during the course observations, extensive field notes were taken by the researchers as non-participant observers, without being involved in instructional activities and processes (Ciesielska et al., 2018).

Participants

Demographic information about the lecturers (tenure-track and tenured faculty members) who voluntarily participated in the study are given in the table below. Six out of 13 lecturers interviewed have overseas education experience. Thirteen participants' lessons were observed with their and their department head's consent. However, the follow-up interview could not be conducted with one of the participants due to his busy schedule. Participants were assigned codes such as "Lecturer A, B, C, D, E, F".



Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the interviewed and observed lecturers

Code	Departments	Position	Academic experience overseas	Interview	Observation
A	Mechatronics Engineering	Prof.	Yes	✓	✓
B	Chemistry	Prof.	Yes	✓	✓
C	Industrial Engineering	Prof.	None	✓	X
D	Mathematical Engineering	Assoc. Prof.	None	✓	✓
E	Chemical Engineering	Assoc. Prof.	None	✓	✓
F	Chemistry	Assoc. Prof.	None	✓	✓
G	Chemical Engineering	Assist. Prof.	None	✓	✓
H	Industrial Engineering	Assist. Prof.	None	✓	✓
I	Control-Automation Engineering	Prof.	Yes	✓	✓
J	Economics	Assoc. Prof.	Yes	✓	✓
K	Civil Engineering	Assist. Prof.	None	✓	✓
L	Biomedical Engineering	Assist. Prof.	Yes	✓	✓
M	Aviation Electrical and Electronics Engineering	Assist. Prof.	Yes	✓	✓
N	Metallurgy and Materials Engineering	Assoc. Prof.	None	X	✓

Data Analysis

Interview and observation data were analysed qualitatively. The data from the interviews and observations were analysed using thematic analysis. The focus has been on inductive analysis, which emerged from raw data through repeated examination and comparison, and themes emerged as a result of this analysis (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1984). The data collected through interviews and observations resulted in transcripts, field notes, and memos. In order not to miss any details, short notes were taken, and the data were read repeatedly. We followed the steps of thematic analysis, as set forth by Braun and Clarke (2006) and adopted a systematic approach for processing qualitative data through coding. First, we read and read the transcribed data and noted down initial comments by highlighting key ideas. Afterwards, the data were systematically coded across the whole data set. At this stage phrases that reflected specific views were used. Once the codes were determined, they were grouped into themes. In order to validate the themes, they were checked in terms of their agreement with codes. The final analysis involved selecting representative and compelling extracts that reflected the research findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All three researchers were involved in the analysis process so that the analysis of the coders could be compared, and they could decide together on simultaneous solutions to determine the reliability of the coders. The following findings emerged from the data reflect the perspectives and experiences of the participating lecturers. To illustrate the themes, excerpts from the transcripts were used while discussing the findings.

Findings

Classroom observations aimed to capture the natural language behaviours of lecturers and students in the EMI classroom. When the field notes taken during the observations were analysed, eight prominent themes emerged (see Table 2). In the observed lessons, the lecturers generally delivered the new content in English with little to no student participation. While they asked short display questions to check students' comprehension, they often used Turkish to restate key points and terms and share important reminders about the course such

as exams and assignments. The students seldom interacted with the lecturers, and Turkish tended to be their primary choice of medium when asking questions and providing lengthy or complex answers or explanations. The themes derived from the observations are presented along with their frequency counts which refer to the number of participants in whose classes the occurrence of a particular behaviour is observed.

Table 2 Themes obtained from the observations and their frequencies

Themes	N
Lecturers saying, "any questions" as "are there any questions?" or "okay?" at the end of sentences in English	13
Students answering the questions in English briefly with only terms or numbers and preferring Turkish for long answers	13
Expressing the explanations and unfamiliar terms that the lecturer thinks as complex in Turkish after English	12
Students asking questions in Turkish, and even waiting for the moments when the teacher walks between the desks or between the lessons, as they are probably anxious to ask questions in Turkish during the lesson	12
No questions from the students in English, rarely asking questions in Turkish	11
Using Turkish in warnings about the lesson	5
Almost no use of Turkish	4
Lecturer's use of Turkish to make jokes	1

Through a qualitative analysis of the transcribed audio recordings of the interviews, seven distinct codes emerged, reflecting the participants' diverse experiences and perceptions regarding EMI. The identified codes are as follows:

- (1) EMI Not Being Seen as a Challenge in Science Disciplines
- (2) Strategies Used When Students Have Content Comprehension Issues
- (3) Lecturers' Mixed Perceptions of their Experience with EMI
- (4) Perceived Advantages of EMI
- (5) Perceived Disadvantages of EMI
- (6) Emphasis on Internationalization and Its Role in Improving EMI Quality
- (7) Training Needs for EMI

Table 3 provides a summary of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews demonstrated by corresponding codes and their frequency counts. The number of participants who mentioned each concept during the interviews is indicated in the table.

Table 3: Themes, codes, and frequency counts from interviews

Theme	Code	N
Divergent views on the EMI experience	EMI not being seen as a challenge in science disciplines	10
	Strategies used when students have content comprehension issues	13
	Lecturers' mixed perceptions of their experience with EMI	11
	Perceived advantages of EMI	11
	Perceived disadvantages of EMI	10
Significance of internationalization for EMI	Emphasis on internationalization and its role in improving EMI quality	9
Training needs for EMI lecturers	Training needs for EMI	8

Divergent views on the EMI experience

Lecturers commented on the experiences of students across different EMI courses noting that EMI is not perceived as challenging in material sciences. While there are similar findings in the literature, it is important to clarify that these observations are specific to the lecturers in this study and cannot be generalized. In this study, as also noted in Gerber et al.'s (2005) research, in disciplines involving mostly numerical content such as Mathematics Engineering and Chemical Engineering, lecturers stated that the course content rendered the process relatively easy and created no negative impact on the students' learning outcomes and exam results:

I think that teaching in Turkish or English does not make a difference for the Department of Mathematics and Mathematical Engineering. Since it is generally related to numbers, I think it may be due to this. (D)

Yet, students seem to occasionally encounter challenges in courses centred around verbal content such as the History of Chemistry:

So, some courses are more verbal, some others, like ours, are technical courses, where our English is a bit behind. Mathematics, physics, and science are at the forefront. (L)

Similarly, in a qualitative study of Physics students conducted by Airey and Linder (2006), it was found that students perceived no variation in their learning experience of physics whether it is taught in Swedish or English. Our result also aligns with the findings of Neville-Barton and Barton (2005) who uncovered that second-language Mathematics students demonstrated comparable levels of understanding in Mathematics similar to that of first-language students.

In this study, as in the study of Werther et al. (2014), most lecturers admitted that teaching and learning in a foreign language can be more challenging and require more effort. Regarding the difficulties specific to EMI context, as emphasized in the study by Shao and Rose (2022), some lecturers stated that some students had difficulty in coping with two challenging cognitive tasks such as learning English and content at the same time. According to the lecturers, some students cannot learn the deeper content while they are involved in the task of trying to understand the course content in general. As Siegel (2022) points out, with their advanced concepts and discipline-specific jargon, the content of EMI courses can pose comprehension difficulties even in the native language, making the learning process more difficult when conducted in a foreign language. In our EMI course observations, it was seen that the instructor's dominance of the course brought along various problems such as the students being quieter and not asking many questions. However, it is difficult to generalize and say that students' silence is limited to EMI lessons. The same problem is expressed in Hellekjær's study (2010) on Norwegian students' experience of EMI.

Additionally, the lecturers stated that there is actually no distinction in grades between students taking EMI classes and those taking departmental courses in L1, Turkish. According to the lecturers' interviews, students' grades are not adversely affected by taking their courses in English:

There is no difference in students' grades. In fact, the grades of students taking English may be slightly better. The reason for this is that the placement scores of the students in the entrance exam are higher than the students in the Turkish department. Maybe that could make a difference. That's why they get a bit higher [scores]. (D)

In the interviews with the lecturers, it was revealed that lecturers resorted to the use of first language as a strategy in order to cope with the frustrations of their students triggered by EMI courses. Most of the lecturers tended to use L1 whenever they felt the need to clarify the disciplinary content and allowed students to use their L1 in case they want to express themselves and ask questions. Our finding aligns with recent studies (Hong, 2021; Hong & Basturkmen, 2020; Macaro, 2020) indicating that content teachers occasionally incorporate students' first language (L1) during classroom interactions within EMI classes. According to most of the lecturers, the use of first language can help students deal with complex English conceptual knowledge in this sense:

You know, I let them ask questions in Turkish because if we speak English, they avoid asking anything. I still teach in English as much as possible, but if I still feel incomprehensible in those lessons that I gave in English, then I briefly explain it in Turkish. (E)

I continue to teach in English, but if a student requests, I can explain in Turkish. So, we can say that if students do not understand, I explain and simplify it in English as much as my ability allows. It's the same even if it's in Turkish. (K)

On the other hand, most of the interviewed lecturers emphasized that as EMI lecturers, they should not prioritize Turkish over English, as is also noted in the literature (Tri & Moskovsky, 2021). They underlined that they tried to conduct 80-85 % of the course in English. In this second group, consistent with prior studies (e.g. Karakas, 2016), some lecturers stated that they used the presence of international students in their classrooms as a reason to avoid using Turkish in general and emphasized that they supported the English-only environment policy. Lecturers' strategies can stem from either practical or ideological reasons as indicated in the existing literature (Ozer, 2020).

In the interviews with lecturers, it was found that EMI has been perceived as a “mixed bag” invoking conflicting emotions in line with the existing studies (Siegel, 2020; Tang, 2021; Tejada-Sánchez & Molina-Naar, 2020; Volchenkova & Al-Darraji, 2022), and this appears as a recurring theme in their responses. For some lecturers, EMI offers an opportunity to renew themselves and stay up to date in their respective fields (Tejada-Sánchez & Molina-Naar, 2020). EMI serves as a catalyst for professional growth, motivating them to strengthen their fluency and proficiency in English, which in turn enables them to engage with a wider range of academic resources, research publications, and global networks (Turhan & Kırkgöz, 2018; Tejada-Sánchez & Molina-Naar, 2020; Volchenkova & Al-Darraji, 2022). This continual renewal and engagement with EMI can improve their teaching practice and broaden their perspectives, ultimately benefiting both themselves and their students (Tejada-Sánchez & Molina-Naar, 2020; Volchenkova & Al-Darraji, 2022):

Of course, more work is needed. So, you don't have any chance like going unprepared, you have a lower chance of getting unprepared in English class. Secondly, since the student has more difficulty in learning and understanding in English lessons, you must use the styles that will make it easier for the student to understand during and after the lesson. (A)

However, it is important to acknowledge that for some lecturers, the experience of teaching EMI courses can be stressful (Siegel, 2020; Tang, 2021; Volchenkova & Al-Darraji, 2022;). Being proficient in their first language, they may feel a certain level of unease or insecurity when it comes to expressing themselves in English (Siegel, 2020; Tang, 2021; Volchenkova & Al-Darraji, 2022):



I also teach in Turkish at the same time, for example, I have a course for sophomore students, like the probability course, but generally I prefer to give a numerical lesson. I'm not saying I won't teach the other course, but frankly, I didn't study abroad, or I don't use English when I leave the classroom. Of course, teaching English can be a source of stress for me. (C)

Some lecturers stated that as nonnative speakers who do not practice language outside the classroom, they sometimes feel inadequate and insecure in terms of their foreign language, and to overcome this, they rehearse the English they will use in the lesson before they enter the classroom (Yuan, 2021). As they offer more EMI courses, it becomes easier, according to the lecturers. However, it might be difficult when they first start offering EMI courses because it requires creating slides, creating a terminology list for the students, and other tasks:

I enjoy teaching in English very much. Of course, we can express ourselves much better in Turkish, our own language. Yes, I mean, it's easier and more comfortable. Because when we teach in English, it sometimes gets tiring to teach and think whether I used the right word in a sentence at the same time. I try not to make any grammatical mistakes. Other than that, I'm enjoying it. (F)

Although EMI is a contentious issue in both Türkiye and overseas, it has become evident from the lecturers' comments that they have accepted EMI despite all its challenges. The lecturers also listed several perceived advantages of EMI throughout the interviews. One such advantage commonly mentioned was ease of access to English-language course materials in comparison to Turkish language ones:

I don't have much difficulty because the resources are mostly in English, so I don't have any difficulty. In other words, there are Turkish translations, but not every book has a Turkish translation, so I can honestly say that it is better if it is in English, perhaps in terms of preparing lecture notes. (M)

EMI is also viewed as an advantage as contemporary resources are mostly in English, thereby prompting lecturers to naturally incorporate these materials into their teaching methodologies. Similar to the results obtained from previous studies (e.g., Tri & Moskovsky, 2021; Toscu, 2021), most lecturers emphasized the role of English in maintaining effective pedagogical practices:

The courses given in Turkish can fall behind. In other words, they lag behind in terms of content because the professor can say that they conveyed the most up-to-date information verbally anyway. However, in the English courses, you must constantly update the material at hand. (A)

In line with the results of Turhan and Kırkgöz (2018) and Dearden and Macaro (2016), it was also evident from the responses that the lecturers assigned considerable prestige to EMI primarily because it served as an important gatekeeping mechanism for students' future academic studies or professional careers:

In other words, if we think of it from the point of view of students, you know that English is a dominant language in the international arena today, it is a dominant language in science, and most publications are in English. They may have difficulties in following the literature at the moment, but it [EMI] may be useful for them to follow the literature and write articles if they do a master's or a doctoral degree. (I)

In contrast, the lecturers also underlined one serious challenge of EMI: their students' inadequate English-language proficiency for the EMI courses. This finding is also in line with

Cho's (2012) study of lecturers' and students' attitude toward EMI at a South Korean university, as well as Dearden and Macaro's (2016) survey of EMI attitudes of lecturers from Austria, Italy, and Poland. Similarly, the lecturers highlighted that their students avoid asking questions, not to mention participating in class discussions, generally due to their limited language proficiency.

Significance of internationalization for EMI

When asked about the connection between internationalization and EMI, all the lecturers recognized the importance of internationalization in promoting EMI, which was consistent with the results of the existing studies (Aguilar, 2017; Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011; Rose & McKinley, 2018; Werther et al., 2014).

Regarding the acceptance of foreign students, yes, foreign students should be accepted to programs. (G)

I think [foreign students should be admitted to the department]. I mean, the more international it can be, the better, frankly I think we should establish good collaborations and good connections with universities abroad. (I)

Yet, some lecturers questioned some of the incoming international students' preparedness for studying at the tertiary level and underlined the need to reconsider the selection criteria for international students within the context of EMI. Those lecturers mentioned that international students may face challenges due to a lack of background in science and math, which can impact their success in a foreign academic environment. They suggested that it is essential to evaluate additional factors for international students' admission to EMI programs in Türkiye. Most lecturers, on the other hand, stated that carefully selected international students are the driving force in the programs and are also beneficial for EMI programmes. In line with the results of Turhan and Kırkgöz (2018) and Dearden and Macaro (2020), it can be said that lecturers have an external motivation due to the prestige they attribute to EMI and its contribution to internationalization. Again, as Corrales et al. (2016) reveal, lecturers have mentioned the key role of English in student mobility programs such as Erasmus:

We have a lot of foreign students Maybe we need to make the admissions criteria for these students a little stricter, I think we need to increase their quality not the number of international students. (L)

Moreover, some of the respondents thought that the recruitment of international students would compel lecturers and Turkish students to utilize English more frequently in line with the reviewed literature (Ozer, 2020).

Training needs for EMI lecturers

Finally, when asked about whether they needed any EMI support, lecturers in this study underlined the importance of contextual and generally short-term professional development opportunities in EMI, which is in line with the findings reported in Bradford et al. (2022). Similar to the studies of Alhassan (2021), Ozer (2020) and Perez-Canado (2020), the lecturers in this research mostly expressed their demands for linguistic and pedagogical support needs:

I mean, I think there should be speaking clubs.... In other words, there should be support for speaking here In fact, I think it should be like this: I think that speaking support should be



done by teachers who came from abroad, who are not Turkish again. But not just for teaching purposes, speaking, speaking. Like that. (K)

As was also found in Shao and Rose (2022), what emerged in this study is that the lecturers in EMI programs should not only have the necessary content knowledge and English language skills, but also have pedagogical knowledge in order to effectively convey the content to the students. This has important implications for professional development in EMI contexts.

Discussion

The findings of the current study, which employed qualitative data obtained from the interviews and EMI course observations, corroborate previous research findings (Darling, 2021). As seen in the literature (Tri & Moskovsky, 2021), lecturers highlighted the significance of accessibility to English resources as essential for keeping abreast of the rapidly evolving academic landscape. Therefore, in line with previous research (Kim, 2014; Kim et al., 2017), this study shows that EMI can be a powerful means of advancing internationalization and academic competitiveness in higher education institutions. Some lecturers also reported that teaching in another language improved their own speaking skills, reflecting both positive and negative aspects of EMI. Notably, the majority of EMI lecturers devoted slightly more preparation time for EMI lessons compared to their counterparts offering Turkish-medium instruction. During the lessons, in accordance with Liu and Yuan's (2023) study, the lecturers in this study seem to strategically utilize their experiences to offer both linguistic support through scaffolding such as code-switching, translation, further explanation, etc., as well as emotional support through patience and empathy for their students. However, it is worth noting that providing this level of support may require a considerable investment of time from the instructors both before and during the lessons.

Similar to the findings of Ölçü and Eröz-Tuğa (2013), lecturers emphasized that it does not matter whether students take their courses in English or Turkish, but students' willingness plays a pivotal role in the success of EMI. However, according to the lecturers, the challenges faced by students in EMI courses are not quite different from the difficulties they have in their Turkish classes. Furthermore, a vast majority of lecturers expressed positive attitudes towards EMI, asserting that it did not hinder their ability to perform as academics. From the lecturers' perspectives, and similar to the findings of Aguilar-Pérez and Arnó-Macià (2024), our study also highlights the significant positive impact of EMI on students' development, as it equips students to confidently apply language skills in both academic and professional settings. However, aligning with Turhan and Kırkgöz's (2018) research, classroom observations revealed an overemphasis on teacher talk in EMI courses, prompting the need for a shift towards more student-centred and interactive classroom interactions. In accordance with Wolff's (2003) perspective, our study also emphasizes the importance of active engagement in the learning process, a notion further supported by Harris and Strefford (2024), who highlight that the engagement of students is critical to the successful realization of EMI, as it fosters active learning and enhances comprehension. Effective learning goes beyond passive reception of knowledge; it thrives when learners employ cognitive processes such as interpretation, classification, and the integration of new knowledge with existing schemas. Furthermore, our findings emphasize the significance of learners' interaction with lecturers and the material through techniques like questioning, summarization, and critical analysis, as this fosters not only deeper comprehension but also enhanced retention of new knowledge.

Aligned with Jinghui's (2023) study, English and EMI are regarded as essential resources that significantly enhance the internationalization efforts of both practitioners and institutions. The

presence of foreign students in EMI courses was considered a significant variable in the teaching process, although some lecturers expressed concerns regarding these students' linguistic and academic proficiency. Additionally, lecturers perceived teaching in English as a symbol of respectability and viewed it as a means of contributing to their continuous professional growth. However, amidst the positive aspects, lecturers also acknowledged that the preparation and lecturing process for English lessons could be stress-inducing.

Conclusion

The present study delved into the realm of EMI in a state university in Türkiye, offering valuable insights into EMI practices from the perspectives of lecturers. Through classroom observations and in-depth interviews with lecturers, a broad perspective emerged on the utilization of English as the language of education. The results demonstrated that the lecturers have positive attitudes regarding EMI as it is considered as a pathway to a wide array of academic and professional opportunities for both them and the students. Nevertheless, the lecturers also mentioned how EMI could pose difficulties as a relatively more stressful and time-consuming alternative to Turkish-medium instruction for lecturers, which could prove even more challenging due to their students' limited English language proficiency. The lecturers in this study emphasized the value of contextual and short-term professional development opportunities that are specifically designed to meet their linguistic and pedagogical support needs for EMI. It appears that when training programs that address the needs of lecturers are offered, there is a higher likelihood that they will be able to perform their professional role more effectively in EMI settings.

While this study sheds light on several important aspects of EMI from the lecturers' perspectives, there are some limitations to consider. The research was conducted solely at a state university in Türkiye, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other higher education institutions. Although we cannot make broad generalizations about the implementations of EMI, we believe that the results might provide insight into EMI practices in different settings. Additionally, the study merely focused on lecturers' viewpoints, and incorporating students' perspectives could offer a more comprehensive understanding of EMI experiences. Lastly, we acknowledge the lack of observations and an interview with two of the participants due to scheduling difficulties, the contributions of whom would have enriched our interpretation of the findings to a certain extent.

Recommendations

It is apparent from our findings that disciplinary differences should be taken into account in future research and training programs for EMI lecturers. Our findings could also inform the design and implementation of programs that offer pedagogical as well as English-language support for EMI lecturers (Huang et al., 2024). Investigating effective strategies for enhancing two-way classroom interaction and the impact of providing foreign as well as local students with language support in EMI courses with the help of English Language Teaching experts could also yield valuable insights (McKinley & Rose, 2022).

Informed by our findings, we propose an in-service training programme that can be employed to meet lecturers' needs. In light of the different training programmes at universities around the world, which are presented in Deroey (2023), we recommend the following steps:

- (1) Needs analysis: Sessions can be organised with lecturers on the importance and requirements of EMI practices, and the difficulties they experience in their



implementation. If necessary, lecturers can be given time to collect data from their courses for due diligence purposes. The programme is shaped according to their feedback.

- (2) Improving the use of English as a pedagogical tool: Based on the results of the evaluation, a language development programme can be designed and implemented, focusing on specific areas of need. The language used to perform linguistic functions such as asking questions, giving directions, giving feedback may be targeted so that the lecturers can diversify their repertoire.
- (3) Pedagogy and methodology: Training is offered on effective pedagogical approaches and methods for teaching in the EMI environment, including strategies for classroom management and techniques for effective communication with students, as well as the use of technology and other teaching aids.
- (4) Curriculum development: Sessions are organised to assist teaching staff in developing and adapting course materials according to the needs of EMI students. This will help to understand how to create authentic and engaging materials and how to engage learners, how to combine activities and tasks that encourage interaction, and participation may include providing guidance.
- (5) Professional development opportunities: Instructors can be encouraged to continue their professional development by, for instance, providing opportunities for them to participate in workshops on EMI teaching, conferences where EMI is discussed.
- (6) Mentoring and coaching: Lecturers can then be guided by a mentor to support them in applying the strategies and techniques learned during the training programme.
- (7) Evaluation: The effectiveness of EMI programmes can be assessed regularly, and adjustments are made as necessary to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of teaching staff and students.

Finally, it is crucial to emphasize that effective EMI training programs should align with the institutional standards of EMI quality shaped by contextual dynamic. By taking into account the specific sociolinguistic and historical contexts of their institutions, policymakers in higher education should develop clear guidelines regarding the role of English as well as other languages in the linguistic repertoire of EMI stakeholders, the desired learning outcomes of EMI programs, and methods to ensure and enhance instructional effectiveness (Akıncıoğlu, 2024; Ou et al., 2022). Designing EMI teacher training programs in accordance with these guidelines can help policymakers prioritize the recommended actions outlined above.

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